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Cover

**A**N ADDRESS at the Unveiling of  
the Statue of Washington, upon  
the Spot where he took the Oath  
as First President of the United States.  
Delivered 26th November, 1883, by  
George William Curtis.













AN ADDRESS  
AT THE  
UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF  
WASHINGTON.







AN ADDRESS  
AT THE  
UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF  
WASHINGTON,

UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE TOOK THE OATH AS FIRST  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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DELIVERED ON THE (25TH) 26TH NOVEMBER, 1883,  
THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVACUATION OF THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK BY THE BRITISH ARMY,

BY  
GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.



NEW YORK:  
HARPER & BROTHERS.  
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## NOTE.

THE first Congress of the United States assembled in Federal Hall, in New York, on the 4th day of March, 1789, but there was not a quorum present; and it was not until the 30th day of April following that the organization of the Government established under the Constitution was completed by the inauguration of Washington as President.

To commemorate this event, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, on the 21st of February, 1880, initiated a movement to erect a statue of Washington on the steps of the Sub-Treasury building, which stands upon the site formerly occupied by Federal Hall, on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets. The Honorable S. B. Chittenden, Representative in Congress, secured the necessary legislation to authorize the erection of the statue and its subsequent care by the United States.

The services of the eminent sculptor, Mr. John Q. A. Ward, were engaged; the model of a statue was submitted by him and approved by a committee of the Chamber; a subscription list was opened, and the necessary sum of money was contributed.

The celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the evacuation of New York by the British army on the 25th of November, 1783, when General Washington entered the city,



after its long occupation by hostile forces, was chosen as an appropriate time for the unveiling of the statue, its tender to the custody of the General Government, and its formal acceptance by the President of the United States.

On Monday, the 26th of November, 1883, notwithstanding the drenching rain, a large number of persons assembled in Wall and Broad streets, and in the surrounding buildings. At the appointed hour, one o'clock, P. M., the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. George W. Lane, after a few appropriate words, introduced the Reverend R. S. Storrs, D. D., who offered a prayer:

Almighty God, most merciful Father, who art the Author of our life and the Giver of every good and perfect gift:

With reverence and humility we bow before Thine infinite majesty, remembering the fewness of our days, the littleness of our strength, and that our wisdom is but folly before Thee:

With penitence we confess our many offenses, in selfishness and in pride committed against Thee; and we humbly supplicate Thy forgiveness, with the continual helps of Thy grace, which alone may keep us from sinning.

Yet we come to Thee also with thanksgiving and praise, as mindful of the manifold and inestimable benefits which Thou hast bestowed upon us and our households: and we beseech Thee to accept the praises which in grateful adoration we offer before Thee.

It hath pleased Thee, who doest according to Thy will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, to establish here a people for Thy praise, and to give it enlargement on every side. The handful of corn in the earth, on the top of the mountains, Thou hast made in the fruit thereof to shake like Lebanon, and them of the city to flourish like grass of the earth.

We thank Thee for Thy tender and sheltering favor shown to our fathers, in the day of their feebleness, and of their sore struggle.

We thank Thee especially, on this day, for him whom Thou in Thy providence didst set forth to be leader of their armies and wisest of their counselors: whom Thou didst permit to see

Thy pleasure prospering in his hand: and to whom thou hast given, in the nation which he succored, and in all the earth, a long renown. We thank Thee for the powers, of mind and spirit, and of influence over men, which Thou didst graciously commit unto him: that in the day of battle he was wise and patient, steadfast and victorious: that when peace had come, the people rested upon his words, and were guided by him into ways of justice, friendship, and freedom. And we pray that Thou wilt exalt his name, as a banner of strength for ourselves and our children, to the latest generation.

We ask for Thy favor on those who are now, or who shall be hereafter rulers in our land: that they may be wise, faithful, and devout, ruling in justice and in the fear of the Lord; following him who was in his time to the people which honored him as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, as the clear shining after rain.

We ask for Thy blessing upon this city: that its officers may be peace, its exactors righteousness: that its people may dwell in peaceable habitations and in sure dwellings, and may never forget, amid the prosperity and luxury of their life, the service and the sacrifice of those going before, or that Divine goodness from which their unspeakable blessings have come.

We pray for the Nation, of which we are part: that it may be ever exalted by righteousness, blessed and glad because God is its Lord. Thou hast increased it: be Thou glorified in it! Thou hast brought it, in our years, out of fierce peril and pain. It called upon Thee in the day of trouble, and Thou didst deliver it. Thou hast made wars to cease within it: hast broken the bow, and cut in sunder the spear, and burned the chariot in the fire. Thou hast given it of the chief things of the ancient mountains and the precious things of the lasting hills: hast caused it to suck of the abundance of the seas, and hast filled it with the finest of the wheat. Perfect, O God, what Thou hast wrought for it! May it sing praises to Thee, with understanding, and think of Thy loving-kindness in the midst of Thy temples! And wilt Thou, who wast the God of our fathers, be our God also, and the God of this people, forever and ever!

We ask for Thy blessing on the Nation from which we have long been parted, but in whose keeping are the graves of our ancestors, and whose lines have gone out into all the earth. May its people serve Thee in faithful love, and rejoice in Thy

truth which maketh free. May its princes and nobles rule by wisdom, and equity be established by its judges. May those in authority seek the things which make for peace: and may she who sitteth on the throne of the kingdom have serenity in her age and continual affiance in Thee!

We remember before Thee the Nation which gave us friendship and aid in the day of our weakness; with all the peoples from which have come to us in the following time courage and counsel and multiplied strength. And we pray that the blessing which maketh rich, and with which Thou addest no sorrow, may abide upon them all, henceforth and ever.

Further Thy kingdom, we humbly beseech Thee, in all the earth; and as Thou hast given to the children of men the blessed hope of eternal life, through the redemption that is in Christ, send forth of Thy grace upon those in high places, upon all who minister in Thy Name, upon all kindreds and families of mankind: that Thy name may be known on the earth, Thy saving health among all nations.

Grant now Thy blessing unto us here assembled; that that which we do may be for Thy praise: that we may with joy accomplish Thy will in our life on earth: that passing the grave and gate of death we may enter the City whose inhabitants go no more out, but in holy felicity see Thy face!

We ask all blessings, and offer all praises, in the Name of Thy Son, who hath taught us to pray, saying: Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our Daily Bread: and forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Mr. Royal Phelps, of the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce which had been charged with the care of erecting the statue, reported the complete fulfillment of the duties assigned them, and upon the conclusion of the report Governor Cleveland, of New York, unveiled the statue. The President of the United States was then introduced by Mr. Lane, and said:

**"MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:**

"It is fitting that other lips than mine should give voice to the sentiments of pride and patriotism which this occasion cannot fail to inspire in every heart. To myself has been assigned but a slight and formal part in the day's exercises, and I shall not exceed its becoming limits. I have come to this historic spot, where the first President of the Republic took oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, simply to accept in behalf of the Government this tribute to his memory. Long may the noble statue you have here set up stand where you have placed it—a monument alike to your own generosity and public spirit, and to the wisdom and virtue and genius of the immortal Washington."

The address was then delivered by Mr. George William Curtis, after which the Right Reverend Henry C. Potter, D. D., Assistant Bishop of New York, pronounced the benediction.

NEW YORK, December 15, 1883.







## ADDRESS:



THE great series of revolutionary centennial celebrations ends fitly upon this day and upon this spot. The momentous events that marked the opening, the culmination, and the close of the conflict, have been duly commemorated, and for eight years the full-stretched memory of the country, a harp of a thousand strings swept by patriotic emotion, has resounded with the heroic music of the revolutionary story. To-day the revolutionary story ends. At this hour, a hundred years ago, the last British sentry was withdrawn. The imperial standard of Great Britain fell at the fort

over which it had floated for a hundred and twenty years, and in its place the Stars and Stripes of American Independence flashed in the sun. Fleet and army, royal flag and scarlet uniform, coronet and ribbon, every sign and symbol of foreign authority, which from Concord to Saratoga, and from Saratoga to Yorktown, had sought to subdue the colonies, vanished from these shores. Colonial and provincial America had ended; national America had begun; and after the lapse of a hundred years, the cradle song of the hope and promise of our national nativity is the triumphant pæan of our matured power and assured prosperity; glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men !

✓ A more sorrowful departure history does not record. In that humiliating moment the fruit of the victories of the elder Pitt, which had girdled the globe with British glory and had supplied the pretext for taxing America, crumbled to ashes. The catastrophe was not that an English army was vanquished; it was that England was wounded. It was not a field lost; it was an empire rent asunder. It was not a blunder of military strategy; it was a moral miscalculation. As her wisest statesman had

predicted, England had fallen upon her own sword; and she had drawn it against herself. In striking at her kindred in America, she struck at the political traditions, the immemorial rights, the jealous love of liberty, which are the hereditary pride of the English name; and the rustic continentals who had defended those rights from Bunker Hill to Newburgh, and who returned hither on this day a hundred years ago, marched through these streets as they had marched to the battlefields of the revolution, keeping step to the steady drum-beat of Cromwell's Ironsides at Worcester and Dunbar, and winning at last as great a victory for the English-speaking race. But none the less the political separation of the two countries was complete. England had declined the greatest opportunity that was ever offered to a great nation, and America, panoplied in the mighty memories of her birthright, with the sturdy self-reliance of indomitable conviction and of conscious power, turned to carry forward as a new nation, under other conditions and through other institutions, the cardinal principles of constitutional liberty.

✓ This day, therefore, commemorates the end of the old order, and this spot the beginning of



the new. With the evacuation of New York monarchy ended; with the inauguration of Washington the national republic began. The result, indeed, had been foretold by the course of events through all the colonial period, which culminated in the total overthrow of British power. The early New England confederations—the colonial leagues against Indian hostility—William Penn's suggestion of a provincial Congress—the military association for a common interest and with a common impulse, in the old French and English wars—Franklin's scheme of union at Albany—the first doubt and distrust of British authority—the morning gun of revolution in Jonathan Mayhew's preaching—the thunderburst of James Otis's plea against the writs of assistance—the keen and fatal logic of John Morin Scott in New York, with its plain forecast of separation—the fiery warning of Patrick Henry to the King—the massacre in State street—the Boston port-bill—the response of New York and Virginia—the Stamp Act Congress—and at last, following the shots on Lexington Green and the volley at Concord Bridge, the varying fortune and final triumph of the contest—all these, our renowned and glorious

traditions, immortal as the tale of Thermopylæ and Plataea, of Sempach and Runnymede, revealed the common American heart and conscience, the essential and instinctive unity of the colonies; and, surely and resistlessly as the revolution of the globe through the darkness of the night turns the continent to the morning, the progressive development of the colonies brought the great consummation of American national union, which consecrates this spot.

But it was accomplished only after long and anxious and arduous controversy, with doubt and apprehension, and bitter hostility. The general joy that followed the evacuation of New York, the satisfaction with acknowledged independence, the glowing anticipation, the boundless hope, were succeeded by the reaction that always follows prolonged exaltation of public feeling and devoted and self-sacrificing public exertion. The young giant, indeed, had conquered, but his victory seemed to have cost him his life. Foreign authority had disappeared, but the country lay prostrate.

In the midst of our civil war, by an exquisite stroke of diplomacy, the Secretary of State invited the ministers of foreign powers to a pleasure excursion through New York, that

they might witness the unabated prosperity of a single State and report to Europe that, while the United States maintained a million of men in the field and upon the sea, there was no apparent diminution of population, no interruption of industrial activities and ordinary pursuits, and no visible drain upon seemingly exhaustless resources. But when the revolution ended, commerce had perished, agriculture languished, and manufactures were stifled by foreign competition. The public debt was enormous, and private debt was universal. We have seen the stupendous burden of our civil war borne with cheerfulness, and regularly and continuously reduced with ease. But in the year after the evacuation of New York, bills of the Confederation for six hundred thousand dollars were protested in Holland, and the whole requirement of the Treasury for the year, which was four millions of dollars, was universally felt to be a sum too large to demand, and which could not be collected. Taxation was resisted, State authority was defied, and the feeble and futile government of the Confederation, a mummy clad in robes of state, without power and without consideration, was scorned abroad and contemned at home.

The times that tried men's souls in this country were rather in 1786 than in 1776, for the colonial ability to win independence involved neither the righteousness of the cause nor the character of the people. The revolution had proved their valor, and had been successfully achieved. But the new situation tested their wisdom; and without wisdom the revolution had been in vain. By the common exertion, sacrifice, and suffering, independence had been secured, the enemy had been expelled, and the younger England of the West had humbled the crowned and unnatural mother England upon the sea-girt throne. In this crucial moment neglect or ignorance of the obvious and indispensable means of securing the common safety, strength, and welfare, the apparent revelation of American incapacity to build a national American commonwealth might justly fill every generous and patriotic heart with dismay.

Yet if any American despaired during the gloomy years from 1783 to 1787, and doubted whether the men were equal to the task, so had John Adams doubted and despaired on the very eve of the assembly of the Continental Congress. "We have not men fit for the times," he exclaimed; "we are deficient in

genius, in education, in travel, in fortune, in everything." But scarcely had he spoken when he hastened to take his part in that immortal assembly, and to do the very thing that he feared no man was strong enough to do. Well did Jefferson call him the Colossus, for upon his mighty and indomitable will he lifted the country to the Declaration of Independence. Why then doubt, since independence had been achieved, that national union was possible? The leaders of the revolution, the chiefs of the Continental Congress, still lived. Age had not dimmed their eyes, nor chilled their hearts, nor withered their faculties. The work they had begun, surely they were ready to complete, and the men who had made the English Colonies American States were wise enough and strong enough to bind the American States into a nation.

Nay, even doubt was treachery. For still *he* lived—in the prime of glorious manhood he still lived—whose faith, and constancy, and courage, when patriotism despaired and hope expired, had moved before his struggling country a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night. To think of the revolution is to see him. The whole scene is radiant with his presence and his power. He

was, indeed, but one patriot among patriots, and an ardent and general patriotism it was that marshaled Minute Men and enrolled Sons of Liberty. It was a sublime popular daring that defied the British empire and made good its defiance. Doubtless the American revolution was the work of the people, but it seems the work of a man. How can we conceive its heroic prosecution, its triumphant issue, without its leader? Had he fallen at Trenton; had he been captured by Clinton; had intrigues of selfish ambition prevailed against him; had he not nerved—he alone—the hesitating army at Newburgh, who dare doubt that the vision of the “one far off, divine event” that drew the country through the war, would still have been fulfilled? But what American does not know, and proudly own, that the perpetual and inspiring assurance of that event, the cheer of the weary march, the joy of the victory, the confidence of Congress, the pride and hope of America, was the character of Washington?

No voice for a powerful Union was earlier or stronger or more constant than his. The fervor of his conviction kindled the faith of the country. Samuel Adams might hesitate, and Patrick Henry doubt, but Washington was sure. Union

alone had won independence, union alone could secure it. Without union there was no common revenue, no common regulation of commerce, no settlement of common territory, no common bond between adjacent States. Instead of these, there were discord, anarchy, and subjugation.

Indeed, they were already at hand. While England refused to relinquish the western forts, and contemptuously demanded of John Adams some security that the separate States would not nullify the decrees of the Confederation, while Europe awaited disdainfully the dissolution of a loose and jarring league, the States themselves, pinched with poverty, jealous of Congress, withheld their contributions to the common treasury, and encountered from their own citizens armed defiance of their own authority. The situation was intolerable. Lawlessness and license, masquerading as liberty and independence, threatened the rural republicans as the leering satyrs in the fable deluded the simple shepherds of the plain. But the high destiny of the English-speaking race was not to be thwarted. The ancient traditions of that people, whose political genius is strong common sense, are not of liberty only, but of constitu-

tional liberty, and of a sagacity and skill which secure and perpetuate that liberty in adequate and flexible institutions. Devotion to liberty and loyalty to law, proceeding with equal step, have together led the race of which Washington is the consummate flower from the gloom of the ancient German forest to the imperial splendor of England and the republican glory of the United States. But the children of liberty are wise in their generation. There were American States after the revolution, and there were constitutions of States. But there was no common constitution, no common guarantee both of the rights of States and the liberties of the citizens; and, in the midst of States and constitutions, State authority, and individual liberty, and the general welfare itself, were perishing.

Then, as in the passionate excitement but uncertain movement of the early revolution, a paper passed mysteriously from patriotic hand to hand, firing every patriotic heart with the magic motto, "*Join or die*"; so, in the air now electric with national feeling, "Join or die" became the burden of the mighty chorus that rolled from out the heart of the people. It was resistless, like the demand for Indepen-



dence ten years before. The convention assembled. Washington, the good genius of union, presided. Wise and heroic patriots framed the Constitution and submitted it to the people. For ten months the land shook with the great debate upon its ratification, and it was the conclusive argument for the Constitution that Washington would be the first President. In this very street Alexander Hamilton met John Lamb, the ardent leader of the Sons of Liberty, who distrusted the new scheme of government, and argued with him that fear was folly, since Washington would be the President. "Good," replied Lamb, "for to no other mortal would I entrust authority so enormous." At length the decision of the people was recorded. Eleven of the thirteen States had solemnly adopted the Constitution, and in the jubilee of joy that followed, as of a people breaking a deadly spell, opposition was silenced, and the man who, like Moses, had led his country through the Red Sea of armed strife, was summoned by the instinctive love and perfect confidence of the whole people to perform the miracle for which they waited, and, like a greater than Moses, to stretch forth his hand and raise the dead frame of national union to life.

With that manly humility and modest simplicity which always invested his greatness, like the rosy hue that suffuses the awful summit of Mont Blanc, Washington writes in his diary, on the 16th of April, 1789: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectation." From State to State, from town to town, along that triumphal way from Mount Vernon, the air murmured with benedictions as he passed. Under laureled arches and walking upon flowers, amid the music of bells, the thunder of cannon, the acclamations of the people, the singing of hymns, and the eloquence of votive addresses, Washington came at last to New York, and landed at the foot of this street, amid such joyous exultation as New York had never known. After a week had passed, the great object of his coming was to be accomplished, and on the 30th of April, 1789, the procession attending the President moved from his house on Franklin Square, through Pearl street to Broad, and

through Broad street to the spot upon which we are now assembled.

Among the most imposing events in history must always be accounted the simple ceremony which was transacted here. The human mind craves lofty figures for a memorable scene, and loves to decorate with fitting circumstance the fulfillment of great affairs. For this event all such conditions were satisfied. The scene was set with every ample preparation of historic significance and patriotic association, with the most eminent actors, with the most auspicious anticipation. For the occasion itself America offered no place more becoming, for no spot is more conspicuously, more honorably, or more closely identified than this with the history of American liberty. The scene around us is marvelously changed, indeed, from its aspect in the colonial, the provincial, the revolutionary city. How transformed this street from the resort of fashion, the seat of the State Government, the modest residence of merchants, diplomatists, and statesmen, which was the Wall street of a century ago! Then the social and political heart of a small and struggling community, it is now the financial nerve-centre of a continent. But if the vast competitions and contentions of

capital and enterprise which involve the prosperity of states and nations have overlaid the plain scene of political strife with a field of cloth of gold, yet still the hallowed soil is here. The swarming street is but a picture painted over. Beneath the ever shifting characters of speculation and of eager trade, incessantly traced upon this pavement of the modern city, lies the undimmed and indelible patriotic record of old New York.

The spot upon which we stand was the site of the second City Hall, which, for more than a hundred years, was the central seat of the active political life of the State and city. Faneuil Hall, in Boston, is justly called the cradle of the revolution, for it rocked the infant cry against ministerial injustice into the overwhelming chorus of freedom and independence. Carpenter's Hall, in Philadelphia, sheltered the Continental Congress. In Philadelphia also, in the State House, the great debate upon independence proceeded, and there the great Declaration was signed. The titles of such monuments to renown and endless national gratitude no envy assails, no rivalry disputes. But the city of Hamilton, of Jay, of Livingston, of John Lamb, and Isaac Sears, and Gouverneur Morris,

as it moved with equal step by its sister cities in the field, cherishes the historic sites of its own patriotic activity with the same reverence that it salutes those of its peers.

Here, in 1735, the trial of John Zenger established the freedom of the American press, and declared the cardinal principle of its liberty, that the publication of the truth is not a libel. From the Assembly of New York, sitting in this place in 1764, proceeded the protest against the Stamp Act, and here the Committees of Correspondence were appointed which combined and organized colonial action. In this ancient hall assembled the Stamp Act Congress, the first Congress of the United Colonies, whose clear and uncompromising voice announced the American purpose and foretold American independence. It was a New York merchant, President of the Chamber of Commerce, who wrote the address of the Congress to the House of Commons. They were New York merchants who, as the Congress adjourned, attested their high design by forming a league and covenant of non-importation. It was to a New York merchant, as Mayor of the city, that the British Governor of the province and the commander of the royal

forces surrendered the hated stamps, and to this spot they were brought in solemn procession, amid the shouts of rejoicing citizens.

From the balcony of the hall that stood here the Declaration of Independence was first read to the citizens of New York, and, although the enemy's fleet had entered the harbor, the people as they listened tore down the royal arms from the walls of the hall and burned them in the street, as their fiery patriotism was about to consume the royal power in the province. Here sat the Continental Congress in its closing days, here John Adams was commissioned as the first American Minister to Great Britain, and here the Congress received Sir John Temple, the first British Consul-General to the United States. Here Jefferson was selected by Congress as Minister to France, and here Secretary Jay, with the same equable mind and clear comprehension and unbending integrity that afterward illustrated the first exercise of the judicial power of the Union, directed the foreign affairs of the Confederation. Here, also, when the Confederation disappeared, the first Congress of the Union assembled. Indeed, we are enveloped by inspiring memories and kindling local associations. Yonder, almost

within sound of my voice, still stands the ancient and famous inn where the Commander-in-Chief tenderly parted with his officers, and there, over the way, where once a modest mansion stood, the *Federalist* was chiefly written. The very air about this hallowed spot is the air of American patriotism. To breathe it, charged with such memories, is to be inspired with the loftiest human purpose, to be strengthened for the noblest endeavor. By the most impressive associations, by the most dignified and important historic events, was this place dedicated to the illustrious transaction which we commemorate to-day.

But the majesty of the event was not its circumstance; it was its import. A people whose courage and endurance in the field, and whose capacity of local self-government, had been amply tested, was here to take its place as a united republic beside the ancient and powerful monarchies of Christendom. It was to do this amid the scornful distrust of the world, and involved in domestic jealousies and vast and obscure internal perils. The hope of success lay apparently in one man, revered and beloved as no other man had ever been, and upon the successful issue of the trust to which he was

here solemnly devoted. What scene in human history transcends the grandeur and the significance of that consecration? Gazing upon this sculptured form, and remembering that this was the very hour and this the place of the sublime event; that here, under the benignant arch of heaven, Washington appeared to take the oath of his great office,—the air is hushed, even the joyous tumult of this glad day is stilled, the familiar scene fades from before our eyes, and our awed hearts whisper within us: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The streets, the windows, the roofs, were thronged with people, and, drowning my feeble voice, surely you can hear the vast and prolonged shout that saluted the hero. Touched to the heart by the affectionate greeting, he advanced to the railing, and, placing his hand upon his breast, he bowed low, and then for a moment, overwhelmed by emotion, he stepped back and seated himself amid a sudden and solemn silence. Then he arose, and coming forward, his majestic and commanding frame stood upon the identical stone upon which I stand at this moment, and which, fixed fast



here beneath the statue, will remain, in the eyes of all men, an imperishable memorial of the scene. Near Washington were John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Roger Sherman, Chancellor Livingston, General Knox, General Sinclair, Baron Steuben, and other famous men. The Chancellor, in his robes, solemnly recited the words of the oath. The Secretary of the Senate raised the Bible. Washington bent low, and audibly saying, "I swear, so help me God!" reverently kissed the book. "It is done," cried the Chancellor, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!" "Long live George Washington!" shouted the people in one resounding cry of exultation. "Long live George Washington," rang all the bells and roared all the cannon of a continent. "Long live George Washington," echoed every heart and voice in the world that pleaded and beat for liberty. And now, after a hundred years have passed, more reverently, more universally, more gratefully, than ever, in all civilized lands in which the greatness of his example has exalted the estimate of human character and the standard of human conduct, every people fervently prolongs the prayer, "Long live George Washington!"

The task upon which he entered here was infinitely greater than that which he undertook when, fourteen years before, he drew his sword under the elm at Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental army. To lead a people in revolution wisely and successfully, without ambition and without a crime, demands, indeed, lofty genius and unbending virtue. But to build their State,—amid the angry conflict of passion and prejudice and unreasonable apprehension, the incredulity of many, and the grave doubt of all, to organize for them and peacefully to inaugurate a complete and satisfactory government,—this is the greatest service that a man can render to mankind. But this, also, is the glory of Washington. The power of his personal character, his penetrating foresight, and the wisdom of his judgment, in composing the myriad elements that threatened to overwhelm the mighty undertaking, are all unparalleled. “Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality,” he said to Lafayette, “are necessary to make us a great and happy people.” But he was not a man of phrases, nor did he suppose that government could be established or maintained by lofty professions of virtue. No man’s perception of the indis-

pensability of great principles to the successful conduct of great affairs was ever more unclouded than his, but no man had ever learned by a more prolonged or arduous experience that infinite patience, sagacity, forbearance, and wise concession must attend inflexible principle, if great affairs are to be greatly administered. His countrymen are charged with fond idolatry of his memory, and his greatness is pleasantly depreciated as a mythologic exaggeration. But no church ever canonized a saint more worthily than he is canonized by the national affection, and to no ancient hero, benefactor, or lawgiver, were divine honors ever so justly decreed as to Washington the homage of the world.

With the sure sagacity of a leader of men, he selected at once, for the highest and most responsible stations, the three chief Americans who represented the three forces in the nation which alone could command success in the institution of the government. Hamilton was the head, Jefferson was the heart, and John Jay was the conscience. Washington's just and serene ascendancy was the lambent flame in which these beneficent powers were fused; and nothing less than that ascendancy could have ridden the whirlwind and directed the storm that

burst around him. Party spirit blazed into fury; John Jay was hung in effigy; Hamilton was stoned; insurrection raised its head in the West; Washington himself was denounced; and suddenly the French Revolution, the ghastly spectre rising from delirium and despair, the avenging fury of intolerable oppression, at once hopeful and heart-rending, seized modern civilization, shook Europe to the centre, divided the sympathy of America, and, as the child of liberty, appealed to Washington. But the great soul, amidst battle, and defeat, and long retreat, and the sinking heart of a people, undismayed, was not appalled by the convulsion of the world. Amidst the uproar of Christendom he knew liberty too well to be deluded by its mad pretence. Without a beacon, without a chart, but with unwavering eye and steady hand, he guided his country safe through darkness and through storm. In the angry shock of domestic parties, "there is but one character which keeps them in awe," wrote Edmund Randolph. "The foundations of the moral world," said a wise teacher in Cambridge University, bidding young Englishmen mark the matchless man,— "the foundations of the moral world were shaken, but not the under-

standing of Washington." He held his steadfast way, like the sun across the firmament, giving life, and health, and strength, to the new nation; and upon a searching survey of his administration, which established the fundamental principles of American policy in every department of the Government, there is no great act which his country would annul, no word spoken, no line written, no deed done by him, which justice would reverse or wisdom deplore.

Fellow-citizens, the solemn dedication of Washington to this august and triumphant task is the event which this statue will commemorate to unborn generations. Elsewhere, in bronze and marble, and upon glowing canvas, genius has delighted to invest with the immortality of art the best-beloved and most familiar of American figures. The surveyor of the Virginia wilderness, the leader of the revolution, the president, the man, are known of all men; they are everywhere beheld and revered. But here, at last, upon the scene of the crowning event of his life, and of his country's life,—here, in the throbbing heart of the great city, where it will be daily seen by countless thousands; here in the presence of

the President of the United States, of the Governor of New York, of the official authorities of other States, of the organized body of New York merchants who, as in other years they have led the city in so many patriotic deeds upon this spot, lead now in this commemoration of the greatest; and finally, of this vast and approving concourse of American citizens, we raise this calm and admonishing form. Its majestic repose shall charm and subdue the multitudinous life that heaves and murmurs around it, and as the moon draws the swaying tides of ocean, its lofty serenity shall lift the hurrying throng to unselfish thoughts, to generous patriotism, to a nobler life. Here descended upon our fathers the benediction of the personal presence of Washington. Here may the moral grandeur of his character and his life inspire our children's children forever!



















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